

ZEROING IN ON COST

**New student created software will help
Fond du Lac company evaluate its estimating process**

by Sean Fitzgerald,
New North B2B publisher

Fond du Lac-based AMC of Wisconsin has come a long way during the past few months from putting out proverbial fires in its business operations to laying the groundwork for profitability.

Axel and Carmina Mendez, owners of the 35-employee decorative stone countertop fabricator, have spent a good portion of 2017 working with Gary Vaughan of Guident Business Solutions in Appleton to improve the performance and profitability of their business as part of *New North B2B* magazine's Firefighters of Northeast Wisconsin initiative.

COMPANY: AMC of Wisconsin

OWNERS: Axel and Carmina Mendez

LOCATION: Fond du Lac

FOUNDED: 2002

EMPLOYEES: About 40

WHAT IS DOES: Fabricator of decorative stone countertops for the home improvement industry.



Now more focused on opportunities to cut costs and operate more efficiently, the Mendezes received a parting gift from the three Lawrence University seniors who've been assisting them this past spring. As the students prepared to graduate in early June, they created a custom Excel program to help the company with its job costing function. The software is expected to help AMC better determine which jobs are profitable and which are less than break even, said Vaughan, who also taught and advised the students this past semester through his role on Lawrence's business and entrepreneurship faculty.

"This program will speed up their process for evaluating jobs after they have been completed, comparing their estimates to their actual expenses for each job," Vaughan said.

Heading into the final stretch of our Firefighters initiative in the month ahead, Vaughan indicated he and the Mendezes are developing a strategic plan that will look out the next three years for AMC of Wisconsin. It will be accompanied by an annual operating budget which Axel and Carmina will use as a sales and expense target as they evaluate their monthly performance going forward.

"We want to set in place a plan to accomplish their goals and allow them to have a perpetual three year outlook going forward," Vaughan said.

Vaughan said the end goals for the Mendezes are to increase top line sales for AMC of Wisconsin and grow the couple's equity line on their balance sheet. The strategy Vaughan will help them implement in the month ahead should lead them down the path to achieve their goals.

B2B will return with a final capstone article wrapping up our 6th Annual Firefighters of Northeast Wisconsin initiative in our August 2017 edition. ■

Gary Vaughan

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Vaughan launched Guident in 2009 after spending his entire career teaching – both in the classroom and in business. Vaughan has professional experience in a variety of industries, including retail, petroleum, manufacturing and academics. He is a senior adjunct instructor in the MBA program at Concordia University of Wisconsin, and a lecturer in economics and entrepreneurship at Lawrence University in Appleton.

Methodology

New North B2B magazine began seeking entries for its 6th annual Firefighters of Northeast Wisconsin initiative late last year, with a goal of assisting those northeast Wisconsin small business owners who feel as if they're constantly burning the candle at both ends, putting out fires, spinning their wheels, but intent on finding a way to improve.

Through the generous help of Gary Vaughan of Guident Business Solutions in Appleton, AMC of Wisconsin's owners Axel and Carmina Mendez will receive five month's worth of consulting at no cost to help them work on the strategy of improving their business profitability.

B2B will provide a monthly update on the progress of the Mendezes efforts in each issue leading up to a capstone article in the August 2017 issue of *New North B2B* magazine.